

that each person has an important role. Under her leadership, The Action Center's revenue increased by more than 600% since 2002. Directly affecting the community she serves in such a positive way.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Mag Strittmatter for her well deserved honor by the West Chamber serving Jefferson County. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all her future accomplishments.

IN RECOGNITION OF RALPH WHITE

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 19, 2013

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I, along with Representative Kennedy, Representative McGovern, Representative Neal, and Representative Tsongas rise today to recognize Mr. Ralph White, President of the Retired State, County and Municipal Employees Association of Massachusetts, upon his upcoming retirement.

Mr. White has diligently served the Association for the past forty-five years, and his leadership has guided this organization through many changes. Having retired at the age of thirty-eight from his position as a parole officer in the aftermath of a gunfire assault, Mr. White knew that there was still much for him to give to the Commonwealth. He then began his role of President of the Association. Throughout his tenure, he was instrumental in enacting many key reforms that benefit retirees. Such reforms included raising the pension cost-of-living ceiling, ensuring that retirees' and survivors' health insurance payments remained at a reasonable level, and improving protections for disability retirees. Mr. White has given a great deal to the Association and to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and his perseverance has touched many lives.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join us in thanking Mr. Ralph White for his many years of service.

HONORING THE BARBER SHOPPE IN KIRKLAND

HON. SUZAN K. DELBENE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 19, 2013

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Barber Shoppe in Kirkland on fifty years of successful business. Since it opened in 1964, the Barber Shoppe has been providing the community with quality service and customer care. Their commitment to excellence has ensured that business stays steady in rough economic times and remains a local favorite.

I would like to give special recognition to Bill Bitz, the man who first started the business in the 1960's. Although Bill died last year at the age of 86, his legacy lives on at the Barber Shoppe. Bill instilled a special charm in the family-owned business that is behind its popularity.

Bill's daughter, Brenda Gordon, proudly took over the shop from her father when he retired.

Gordon's training at Folks Barber College in Renton has helped her to continually enhance and improve the shop.

Although the shop now has a new building and a new name, it continues its legacy of classic comfort and high quality care. The Barber Shoppe serves as a role model for many other local businesses that hope to achieve a similar record of success.

I congratulate the Barber Shoppe on all of its accomplishments, and thank it for its contribution to the Kirkland community.

HONORING MR. RAYMOND THOMAS "R.T." RYBAK

HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 19, 2013

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the contributions of R.T. Rybak to the city of Minneapolis during his 12-year tenure as mayor, and to applaud his leadership in areas from education to government accountability to economic opportunity. Mayor Rybak has been an outstanding leader, a great public servant and a close friend.

R.T. Rybak, a Minneapolis native, began his distinguished career as a journalist for the Minneapolis Tribune. While working for various media outlets—including the Twin Cities Reader, Minnesota Public Radio, and Public Radio International—he was also an organizer who ran political campaigns and engaged in community activism. He campaigned for airport noise mitigation, sponsoring the famous "Pajama Protest" of 1999. Mayor Rybak's tactics have been inventive and inclusive, and his openness has made him a strong ally of communities often left out of the political process.

Mayor Rybak confronted a city with serious challenges: an increasing budget deficit, a stark achievement gap, pension issues, and public safety concerns. He went to work immediately, making difficult decisions to adjust taxes and budget priorities. Under his leadership, Minneapolis cut spending by 16 percent and paid down \$350 million of the city's debt, in spite of repeated state-level funding cuts. Faced with crises such as the 2007 collapse of the I-35W bridge, and the 2009 Great Recession, Mayor Rybak helped the city recover with poise and energy. He was a strong advocate for Minneapolis residents, while also using these opportunities to bolster mass transit infrastructure and to further diversify our economy. Minneapolis has recovered all 10,000 jobs lost in the recession, and added an additional 5,000. The city now ranks first in the country for its low unemployment rate, and is less susceptible to future economic fluctuations.

Minneapolis is safer now than it has been in years. Most crimes have fallen to levels not seen in 35 years.

The people of Minneapolis are also more connected and informed. City-wide wireless internet, digital access to government information and services, and a forum for viewing city goals have made Minneapolis more open and accessible.

Mayor Rybak's advocacy for North Minneapolis, in particular, has been long overdue on the city's agenda. He increased city investment in addressing persistent gaps in edu-

cation, housing, and economic opportunity that have faced North Minneapolis for decades. He championed programs that trained residents and placed them into good jobs, working with businesses to create sustainable, meaningful employment. He reduced foreclosures, and used city-owned land to promote affordable green housing. Mayor Rybak has laid the foundation for revitalizing North Minneapolis, and I am confident that our city's future leaders will follow his lead.

Mayor Rybak has also tackled the significant challenges facing Minneapolis schools. He started Minneapolis Promise, which provides young people with free college and career counseling and high-quality summer jobs. Since 2004, the STEP-UP internship program has given real-world job experience to over 18,000 Minneapolis youth. Rybak has led the effort to close one of the nation's widest achievement gaps by connecting schools, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and businesses to work together for our children's futures. This will be one of the lasting achievements he leaves with Minneapolis, as he continues the fight to close the achievement gap as the next Chief Executive of Generation Next.

Minneapolis will always be indebted to Mayor Rybak. From the balanced books of the city's treasurer, to the youth who can aspire to greater opportunity than their parents, to the residents headed to a secure job after months or years out of work, his achievements have improved Minneapolis and I thank him for his tireless service to our community.

LAKEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 19, 2013

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Lakewood High School for their tremendous compassion and character shown during the floods that happened in the State of Colorado in September. This high school located in Lakewood, Colorado must be acknowledged because they showed incredible spirit and support to other schools around Colorado during a time of emergency.

After winning the Good Morning America Katy Perry contest, the students of Lakewood High School used their moment in the national spotlight to direct national attention towards other students throughout the state affected by the floods. There are countless stories of different student groups and organizations within the school sending supplies, money and support to other students who were in need the most. This is exemplary of the character and compassion the faculty instills in the students at this high school.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Lakewood High School in their display of school spirit for their school and also for the State of Colorado. I am certain the students in this school will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of their future accomplishments.